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WOMEN AND APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA

INTRODUCTION

1. Africa and the international community remain seized with the continuing problem of the racist system of apartheid. The deleterious effects of the inhuman system are borne by all oppressed people in South Africa and Namibia, especially women and children. But equally many women of South Africa and Namibia have risen with determination, courage and heroism to resist and fight apartheid, alongside their men, in a bitter struggle which has intensified within the period of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976 to 1985). However it is impossible to consider women's problems in isolation; their solutions must be sought within the destruction of the political, economic and ideological framework of the entire apartheid edifice.

2. Although acquiring the name only in 1948, apartheid is an old colonial form of national oppression and economic exploitation developed from notions of racial pride, colour bar and segregation. The system has undergone superficial changes in form and methods of implementation, but the essential concept and goals remain the consolidation of white domination. The non-white people of South Africa and Namibia live under an exploitative colonial system where there is no spatial separation between themselves and the colonizing power which constitutionally defines them as a subordinate category of persons. The apartheid system has been developed and sustained as an integral part of the world capitalist economy according to a racial formula that has ensured that capital accumulation would be largely a white prerogative, sponsored by a plentiful, cheap and repressively controlled non-white work force.1/

3. The apartheid state in South Africa and Namibia has been caught up in the 1980s in the general crisis that has engulfed the world capitalist economy. But, being the most predatory part of that economic structure, it has felt much more deeply the crisis which has manifested itself in sharpened tension between aspects of the economic and political power. Economically, the regime's capital intensive technology now requires a relatively small, stable skilled labour force and not the multitudes of cheap unskilled labour hitherto employed. The adjustment necessitates political changes such as breaking the colour bar of job reservation by training some black South Africans and permitting them to settle in urban centres. For the resulting masses of the unemployed, the final solution has been to disown them as foreigners who belong to the so-called independent "nation states" or Bantustans which are enclaves of poverty, disease and starvation. The overwhelming majority of "denationalized" black women and children live in these enclaves.

1/ Firoz Cachalia, 'The State Crisis and Restructuring 1970-1980' in Africa Perspectives No. 26 (1983), p.5

4. Additional pressures on the apartheid economy in the 1980s include the falling price of gold, the long drought, the declining foreign investment in mining and industry in Namibia because of the escallating guerrilla war of independence waged by the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and the enormous cost of that war to the South African regime. In general, whites on their own can no longer guarantee the continued existence of white domination (as workers, soldiers and voters). Their social base is too narrow to sustain the apartheid machinery, hence, the government's attempt to win new allies from the so-called Coloured and Indian populations in the new tri-cameral parliament in South Africa. Structured on racist lines to preserve apartheid, the new system excludes blacks whose popular resistance must therefore be intensified as the most oppressed people. In Namibia also political manipulations for an internal solution have been vigorously challenged by SWAPO.

5. The World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhagen, 1980) gave the international community an opportunity to review the effects of apartheid on women at the mid-Decade point.[2/] The Conference condemned apartheid which negates the goals of the Decade, adopted measures of assistance to the struggling women of South Africa and Namibia and by its resolution 45 inter alia called upon the women of the world to pressurize their governments:

a) to sever all links - political, economic, diplomatic and military with the apartheid regime; and

b) to disseminate the information on the effects of apartheid as widely as possible.

Two years later the Conference of Ministers of Economic Planning and Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) decided by its resolution 447 (XVIII) of 30 April 1982 that an item on women and apartheid be included in the agenda of the African Regional Conference to be held in 1984 in preparation for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace to take place in Nairobi, Kenya in July 1985. The need for wide discussion was reaffirmed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/108 of 16 December 1983 calling on the 1985 World Conference to pay particular attention to the problems of women in territories under racist colonial rule and in territories under foreign occupation and to update the documentation from the international conferences held at Mexico (1975) and Copenhagen.

2/ See Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, 14 to 30 July 1980 (A/CONF. 94/35).

6. This report[3/] attempts to respond to the above mandates by presenting for wide consideration:

a) a review of the situation of women under apartheid and racism in South Africa and Namibia within the United Nations Decade for Women, particularly the progress made and obstacles encountered in the 1980s;

b) an assessment of the resistance of women to apartheid and their struggle for liberation within the Decade; and

c) recommendations on strategies and actions necessary to overcome obstacles encountered and to meet the needs of women beyond the Decade and in post-apartheid Namibia and South Africa.

The paper is divided into three parts. Part I examines the situation of women under apartheid in South Africa and in Namibia particularly as the racist system has affected their political, economic and social status in the 1980s. The review emphasizes the questions of employment, health and education which are the subthemes of the United Nations Decade for Women. Part II assesses women's role in the overall resistance to apartheid and racism and the struggle for liberation in South Africa and in Namibia. Part III recommends forward-looking strategies and actions to be implemented at the national regional and international levels to eradicate the racist system of oppression, to attain peace in southern Africa and to meet the needs of its women and children in equitable development.

7. While the analysis in the paper uses as a context the United Nations Decade for Women, it is important to note that South Africa and South West Africa as governments did not observe the International Women's Year in 1975 or recognise the Decade. Thus no specific programmes were created to integrate women in development under this international impetus. Nonetheless, positive external influences have been exerted, sometimes indirectly, on the movements of women within and outside South Africa and Namibia, towards the attainment of equality, development and peace.

3/ The paper is based on an ongoing study by Ms. Zanele Mbeki, a consultant to the ECA African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW). The substance contained in the paper and the views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of ECA/ATRCW or the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

PART I. APARTHEID AND THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN

A. THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

i) The Background: Territory, Population, Social and Political Structure of South Africa

8. Although relatively small in territory, South Africa is the most affluent country in Africa, due to its rich mineral deposits (gold, diamonds, uranium, copper, manganese, platinum, vanadium) and its advanced industrial development. The vibrant economy is maintained by a multi-cultural population of 30 million or more, of whom 10 million are recorded as economically active. The population in 1982 was conservatively recorded as 28,783,510 consisting of 20,362,510 Africans, 4,500,000 whites, 2,600,000 coloureds and 821,000 Asians. The ten million strong work force is predominantly African (68%), coloured (8.9%) and Asian (2.7%).

9. The Republic of South Africa Constitution Act (1983) which entered into force on 3 September 1984 has created a tricameral Parliament -- one for whites with 178 Members of Parliament (MPs), one for coloureds (80 MPs) and one for Indians (40 MPs). Africans are totally excluded. This Constitution which has been widely opposed within South Africa and condemned by the United Nations Security Council vests real power only in the white community. In the gross inequalities of the system, whites consume over 75% of the national income and occupy 90.1% of the most productive land in the so-called white Metropolitan areas. The ratio of average earnings for blacks and whites is 1:14; the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births for urban blacks is 200, for rural blacks 300 plus; and for whites 27. Although the coloured community has been incorporated in the apartheid tricameral parliament and has its segregated system of municipal government, the feeling of discrimination is thought to be most severe since factors like culture and language, religion, skin colour, living area and recent history do not sufficiently distinguish them from the dominant white group. Most socio-economic indicators reveal gross deprivation among the community, the majority of whom live far below the official Poverty Datum Line (PDL). Half of the male wage-earners receive less than R 500 per year while half of the female wage-earners - many of whom are sole bread winners of households - earn less than R 240 annually.[4/] Asian South Africans, the smallest racial minority incorporated in the tricameral parliament, is confined within the Indian designated areas under the Group Areas Act. They are legally excluded from the Orange Free State. Although their occupational distribution is close to that of whites as compared to the coloureds and Africans, they form part of the under-privileged mass of South Africans in terms of income.

4/ The rate of exchange of the South African Rand to the United States Dollar as of July 1984 was R 1.30 = US$1.00

10. Africans constitute by far the largest majority in the country, both within the so-called "white" areas and within the designated bantustans of Bophuthaswana, Ciskei, Transkei, Venda, Gazankulu, Kangwane, Kwa Ndebele, Kwa Zulu, Lebowa and Qwaqwa. In the "white" Metropolitan, urban and rural areas there are at least 9,900,000 Africans. The total Bantustan population in 1980 was estimated at 11,338,308 with 5,210,469 men and 6,127,839 women. The apartheid imposed migratory labour system and Bantustans policy dictate that Africans may stay in the "white" urban and rural areas only in order to sell their labour at the cheapest rates. Once they are considered no longer economically productive, they are coerced to "resettle" in the poverty-stricken Bantustans, located in various parts of the country and which together constitute 9.9% of South African territory.

11. Despite their numerical strength in society and in the labour force, Africans, both urban and rural, have no vote. They have been excluded from consideration even in the new Republic of South Africa Constitution Act (1983) on the grounds that democratic majority rule would lead to the replacement of white by African domination. The official policy therefore considers Africans as temporary sojourners in "white" South Africa but since their "return to where they came from" could not be achieved overnight an upgraded form of local government was introduced for urban Africans by means of the Black Local Authorities Act in 1982. However, the sincerity of the government's intentions was thrown into question by the provisions contained in two other bills published in the same year: i) The Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill (Genocide Bill) and ii) The Black Community Development Bill. The former undermined the African's few and precarious rights by attaching authorisation to enter "white" areas to housing. It also tightened influx control thus further making it impossible for rural/Bantustans people to gain legal access to urban areas and jobs. The latter Bill consolidated the power and control functions of the administrative boards thereby emasculating and rendering ineffectual the Black Local Authorities. Both Bills were withdrawn for re-drafting, after an internal and international outcry against the legislation. But the apartheid regime brought back the Genocide Bill through the backdoor, under a new label, claiming that it was not an influx control but an immigration measure. The Aliens and Immigration Laws Amendment Act passed in June 1984 will have the net effect of a massive clampdown on blacks from Bantustans.

ii) The Constitutional and Political Position of Women

12. Women as well as men in South Africa are governed by a legal system which always takes account of their race and class positions. When the vote was extended to women in 1930, the Act stated that "women means white women". This legal status has been maintained under the present constitution of the Republic of South Africa whereby only white women enjoy full franchise rights. By contrast and at the opposite end of the spectrum, stand the African women who lack all legal rights of a public or private nature in a constitutionally enshrined position.

13. The lives of non-white women are controlled by variety of regulations and legislation. Thus the Coloured Affairs Department regulates the everyday social circumstance of coloured women. For Asian women there is the mediation of religious law and the Indian Affairs Department's regulations. The lives of African women are controlled by the Native/Bantu Administration and the so-called customary laws which, peculiarly, are interpreted and enforced by the state and not by those who are supposed to own and live by them. Customary law has become the nemesis for all African women. A strong tendency grew in the minds of Native Administration officials who tried and succeeded in keeping African women in a status inferior to that accorded to African men. The Codification of Customary law in Natal provided, inter alia, that "the main elements of Native Law hinge upon a few leading principles: the subjection of the females to the males ..." This principle underlies all laws affecting African women up to the present, thus acting as an artificial form of retribalisation of people whose traditional social structures had already been eroded over the past century with the growth of the modern industrial state in South Africa.

14. The conferment of "independence" on the Bantustans has been so skillfully presented as an exercise in self-determination and as an extension of political rights to blacks that the full impact of this action has been obscured. Not only have millions of Africans living in these Bantustans been transformed into foreigners overnight by legislative decree, but so too have several million Africans living permanently in the urban areas of South Africa. Pretoria has set in motion the implementation of its ultimate fantasy - a South Africa in which there are no black South African nationals or citizens; a South Africa that cannot be accused of denying civil rights to its black nationals for the simple reason that there will be no black South Africans, only millions of migrant labourers (or guest workers) linked by nationality to a collection of unrecognised, economically dependent, client mini-states on the periphery of South Africa.

15. Fifty-seven per cent (nearly 6.5 million) of the African female population live in the Bantustans because of the enforcement of the Bantustan policy and the influx control laws. The women have lost their already precarious rights to seek work in "white" South Africa where there are admittedly vanishing opportunities for jobs. They are prevented from entry into South Africa by the draconian Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act and the Aliens and Immigration Laws Amendment Act of June 1984. Inside the Bantustans they are trapped in poverty and brutal exploitation by South African industry and by the Bantustan "feudal lords". New feudal forms of government in the Bantustans encourage the most reactionary and least democratic aspects of customary practices and institutions. The women reproduce the labour force for the mining and secondary industries at no extra cost to the consumers of the labour. Extended periods of conjugal bliss are unkown to them; life is a long and lonely spell of enforced marital separation.

New Influx Control Laws and Women

16. Influx control laws and forced removals help to tighten implementation of the bantustan policy. The law which haunts women the most is the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 as amended by the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964. Section 10 of which governs the right of an African to be in a proscribed area and the conditions under which he or she may remain there. Recently there have been successful judicial challenges to this law. But these apparent gains are threatened by the Aliens and Immigration Laws Amendment Act of June 1984 which will effectively prohibit the overwhelming majority of men and women in the bantustans from entering areas where there are prospects for jobs. Most of the victims thus confined to the poverty of the bantustans will be women and children considered as "superfluous appendages" in apartheid terminology. Pass raids, arrests and evictions are becoming increasingly frequent. In 1982, 16,532 African women were arrested for influx control offences in the main urban areas.

17. To make the bantustans and the Group Areas a reality, the apartheid regime has embarked on a relentless policy of forcibly moving people from their traditional homes to where the regime wishes them to live. The forced removals under the Group Areas Act have brought untold hardships to over four million blacks and half a million Asians and coloured people. 'Some have been forced to move a second and even a third time to accommodate fresh arbitrary changes that arise when there has been a conflict on land or mineral values'. 5/

Co-option and the Three-Chamber Parliament

18. Black women cannot look up to the new constitutional arrangements for solace, because the so-called reforms entrench racism in a more divisive way. The constitutional arrangements will not alter the nest of white power in South Africa because the coloured and Asian representatives in the three-chamber Parliament will not deliberate, nor do it mulled questions, but issues affecting their respective communities only. Besides, the State Security Council has already whittled down the decision-making power of the existing parliament so that the new ones are being drawn into a progressively more impotent structure. More importantly, the centre of power will remain located in the Whites' chamber (albeit an enlarged one), since the largest majority, the 24 million African men and women will not take part and therefore their interests will not be served.

19. Many coloured and Asian women through the United Democratic Front (UDF) and their various organizations called for a total boycott of the recent elections because they believed that women's equality could only

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5/ Beata Lipman, We Make Freedom: Women in South Africa (1984), p.4

be won through the destruction of the apartheid regime. They are aware that the new constitution would not entrench their second-class citizenship but would legitimise conscription of their youth for the apartheid war against the majority of oppressed people. The consistent programme of militarisation of South African society has direct consequences for men and women whose resistance can now be met with ever more brutal force. For the majority of oppressed women who need a fundamental change in their constitutional and political position the outlook is bleak.

iii) Women and Employment

20. The current economic crisis and growing military expenditure have had a negative impact on the standard of living of the people and the employment possibilities for women. The crisis has brought about unemployment, high inflation and increased prices. This has placed a huge burden on women who customarily have the responsibility for managing household affairs. For the white middle class this has meant women entering the labour force, giving up servants and resorting to household appliances and undertaking more domestic labour in order to stretch the family income further. For the poor working class women it meant an added burden to their dual-day of wage labour and domestic responsibilities. The majority of African as well as coloured and Indian women are similarly affected. Some have been absorbed into wage labour at female rates in the sectors experiencing economic growth, while their men are laid off under the retrenchment policies adopted by many industries.

21. African women in the urban areas have very limited opportunities to work as seasonal or casual, paid agricultural labour in the Border industries. They receive approximately the wages in some instances as low as R 8 to R 15 a week, under appalling working conditions. Increasingly the women are being exploited as manual labour on infrastructural and development work such as road and dam construction, bush clearing and erecting of fences. These are jobs which the men quite rightly see as the last resort because of the low wages and poor conditions of work. Many Bantustan women depend on subsistence on the land or are more and more impoverished by drought, there remains a few Bantu from both groups, however, who earn by basket weaving, a few try prostitution.

Women in the Labour Force

22. Under apartheid conditions, white, coloured, Indian and African workers have differential access to the labour market and occupational mobility within it. After white women, coloured and Indian women have the greatest mobility in the economy and enjoy higher percentages of labour force participation than African women, especially in the factory production, professional and clerical categories. White women were the first to be incorporated into industrial production. When they moved out to clerical, sales and service jobs, their industrial jobs were taken over by African men and Indian women

and thereafter African women slowly came into industrial production as unskilled hands within areas of economic expansion but at the lowest levels. Until then they were to be found solely in domestic service and agriculture. The Department of Statistics estimates that 50% of migrant African women now work in the service sector, 16.6% in agriculture, 12.6% in factory production and a few hold sales and clerical jobs. In the professional category African women constitute 11% and are mainly nurses and teachers with varying degrees of training.

23. The total unsophisticated figure on employed women shows a drastic increase in recent years in the number of women who are in wage labour. Women of all races together now constitute 30% of the so-called economically active population as compared to 20% in 1970. The National Manpower Commission Report for 1981 stated that the number of economically active women increased sharply between 1970 and 1980 for all population groups except African, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Percentage Rates of Change in Labour Force Participation of South African Women

	1970		1980
White women	29.7%	increased to	33.1%
Coloured women	35.2%	"	38.3%
Asian women	19.0%	"	25.7%
Urban African women	31.2%	decreased to	29.6%
Bantustan African women	43.1%	"	37.8%

24. Between 1973 and 1981, there were areas of economic growth within the commercial and service sectors. In the apartheid capitalist tradition, African women were recruited in large numbers to occupy the most menial jobs in areas such as labouring, office and shop cleaning, kitchen work, messenger services etc. Their number increased from 82,468 in 1973 to 112,824 in 1981. The number of coloured women only increased from 21,612 to 39 730 within the same period. Significantly, however, the highest status categories in the sector namely shop assistants, sales persons and clericals were held by coloured and Indian women. Very few white women work in this sector.

25. The female workforce in manufacturing is still small except for clothing and knitting where 63% of workers are female, there are in textiles, shoe manufacturing, electrical machinery, leather and food. The percentage increase of women in certain sectors of manufacturing corresponds with a percentage decrease in male participation. When men demand higher wages in certain industries they are driven out and women recruited to take their place at the low rates of pay. Table 2 illustrates the trend in some of the concerned industries:

Table 2: Percentage Rates of Change in Female and Male Participation in Manufacturing Industries

Industry	Percentage Female Increase	Percentage Male Decrease
Shoes	15.2	48.7
Furniture	2.7	13.4
Clothing	7.2	35.3
Non-metal Minerals	3.6	16.4

26. There is a consistent decrease in private domestic labour for African women as a direct consequence of recession and influx control laws. Another reason in the downward trend is the policy of keeping suburbs and group areas 'white by night', thus making it difficult to register domestic workers and to find housing for live-in workers. Because of its privatised exploitative nature, the low wages and difficulty of unionisation, domestic service is deeply resented by African women. It is resented also because of its menial nature, humiliation and patronage. Domestic servants are expected to drift around the household like shadows because anything that reveals their humanity, their ability to think and feel is a challenge to the racist authority structure of employment in the close quarters.

27. Like many other sectors of the economy, since the 1960's agriculture in South Africa has been subject to mechanisation and monopoly capital penetration. This has resulted in the abolition of labour tenancy. Between 1960 and 1980 more than 1,250,000 people were removed from the white areas and located within the Bantustans with the result that many men could return only as single migrant workers without their families and women became casual seasonal labourers on the farms. The 18.6% of African women farm labourers work for low wages, lower than those paid to male farm workers or are paid in kind. They have neither job security nor legal protection in the most backward labour intensive sector of the economy. For example, the giant Natal Lonsdale Kooperasie (NLK) which in 1983 had an annual turnover of R 150 million paid only starvation wages to many of its workers: R 6.23 per week for a woman with 35 years service.6/ Workers had no annual leave and protesters were threatened with dismissal.

28. The Population Census data on employment in agriculture fails to distinguish clearly between employment on farms in "white" areas and farming activities as self-employment or family labour in the Bantustans. Moreover they suffer severely from changing definitions of female economic activity in Bantustans. In the 1980 census, out of a total of 8,228,680 African women, 6,473,300 or 78% were classified as "not economically active" so that only 22% were in recognised labour. In the same year only 45,998

6/ Survey of Race Relations in South Africa (January 1983), pp. 117

African women in towns were registered as unemployed - a ridiculous figure when so many are so-called economiccaly inactive. Despite official statistics, it is clear that the majority of African women remain without a satisfactory means of livelihood.

29. One of the most significant developments for women during the United Nations Decade for Women was the appointment of the Wiehann Commission in 1981. The Commission visited several countries where industrial legislation had been passed since the International Women's Year in 1975. The Commission acknowledged that statutory provisions such as the Group Areas Act, the Urban Areas Act and the Black Labour Act, amongst others, limited its terms of reference. The evidence given to the Commission nevertheless demonstrated that discrimination against women was perpetuated both through statutory and non-statutory devices. The Commission recommended that legislation be enacted prohibiting discrimination in employment practices based on sex or marital status. The Labour Relations and Wages Act of 1981 thus abolished discrimination based on sex in minimum wage agreement and all new agreements. This new legislation is viewed as a step in the right direction for women in general, but for the African women it will benefit only about 250,000 or the 12.8% who are in industry. The legislation excludes nurses, teachers, agricultural workers and domestic workers all of whom have no access to wage or Industrial Conciliation boards. Thus for them the outlawing of sex discrimination by itself has little meaning. These women have to struggle to organise into trade unions in order to be able to negotiate for employment contracts and the minimum wage.

30. The removal of the concept of "female roles" is a step forward but alongside this must be changes in the idea of "female work". The concept of equal pay for equal work only has validity and effect where workers are doing the same work and have the same access to promotion. Job titles in South Africa are not equivalent to duties performed; women are often moved obliquely or laterally instead of being given the title and status with equal salary and other benefits. The removal of protective legislation e.g. night shift work for women, may open doors for desparate women, but in essence it reflects the need to utilise African and coloured female labour more fully in times and areas of economic expansion where cheap labour is still economically expedient. Old legislation had become archaic and a liability to maximal capital accumulation. The worst aspect of these "relaxations" has been the massive expulsion of unemployed black men and women to the impoverished Bantustans at the same time as they are being denationalised.

iv) Women and Health

31. Besides common diseases associated with hunger and poverty, most deprived women in South Africa have medical problems arising from apartheid stress. The stress comes from forced mass removals to the rural areas, forced splitting up of families because of the migratory labour system, artificial economic deprivation where the law imposes a ceiling on occupational skills and wages according to race and gender, the prohibition of

Mixed Marriages Act in 1949 under which defaulters are convicted or family unions broken, the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act No. 67 of 1952 which obliges Africans to carry passes at all times and produce them on demand, thus resulting in untold harassment and repression as a matter of everyday life.

32. Faced with poverty and pregnancies which employers do not welcome in the work place, many African urban working women are forced to seek the assistance of backyard surgeons who operate on them under unhygienic conditions and often use instruments and medicines which can cause permanent damage and often death. Pregnant women usually lose their jobs. If re-employed, they usually suffer a drop in salary and position. Their absence to have a child is treated as broken service and this affects their wage increases and annual leave. In the business, professional and managerial sectors women suffer equal discrimination in salaries, further training, promotion and general advancement because they might get pregnant. Many women see a chance of retaining their jobs and livelihood through the prevention and termination of pregnancies. Hence in South Africa at least 100,000 illegal or back-street abortions are done every year. Black women have the highest rate of incomplete abortions resulting from such dangerous practices whose casualty rate is impossible to know.

33. There is growing pressure to legalise abortion which is mainly a reaction against the hypocrisy of a repressive system which condones the idea that some pregnancies are not welcomed. The system is bolstered by the huge industry and investment in birth control devices for both men and women. However, then the devices fail, it is the women who must shoulder the consequences. Legalized abortion is not seen as an ideal solution, but so long as imbalances and sources of oppression are not overcome women shall continue to fall victim to dangerous surgery in unhealthy surroundings.

34. On the other hand, in the countryside where possession of children contributes to a woman's standing in the community and also to her economic assets where fathers are away as migrants, the situation reverses itself. Rural doctors report a high incidence of hysterical pregnancies. Young women whose husbands have gone to the cities for prolonged periods become very anxious to fulfill their marriages with offspring. Often this does not happen, but the women nevertheless develop symptoms similar to those of expectant mothers. Final discovery that the symptoms were "hysterical" becomes mentally and socially devastating for the women.

35. Apartheid South Africa has a disproportionately high incidence of malnutrition compared to its Gross National Product. Black infants, especially in the Bantustans, are the worst sufferers, followed by coloured and Indian children. Current priorities in South Africa do not accord much status to health care. The percentage of the Gross National Product spent on health has declined from 4.2% in 1976 to 3.4% in 1980. Only expenditures on family planning aimed primarily at black women continued to rise.[7/]

7/ See South African Review, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 264-267, Survey of Race Relations in South Africa (1983), pp. 524-525.

That 7% only of government expenditure goes for health services, compared to 16.9% for defence, is clear example of the transference of resources from social services in favour of 'security' for whites. The health services are in a state of crisis. With one doctor to every 600 urban people and one to 20,000 in the Ciskei and Transkei, the services are grossly inadequate to cope with the diseases of apartheid social privation such as malnutrition, typhoid, tuberculosis and cholera unknown in South Africa until recently. The 1981 report of the Medical Officer of Health for Cape Town noted that 32.4% of notified cases of cholera were African, 42.6% coloured people, 1.3% whites and 0.2% Asian.

36. The socio-economic environment of the Bantustans makes them prime areas of disease and ill-health. With limited land to grow food and equally limited opportunities to work to purchase it, the women see their children die daily from kwashiorkor, beri-beri, enteritis, hunger and malnutrition. They bear more children to replace the lost ones in a vicious circle which has a debilitating effect on the quality of life and health of the women. As Lauretta Ngcobo says; "Motherhood, the most demanding of physical duties, is for us multiplied and made more fruitless."8/

Health Training for Women

37. State expenditure on the improvement of medical services and the training of black medical personnel reflects the attitude of the regime to the general health situation of the blacks. Whites who constitute 20% of the population have five medical schools while there are only two medical schools for blacks, 80% of the population. These are the Wentworth Medical School for Africans at the University of Natal (Durban) and the new Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA). There are very few black women doctors. In Soweto with an estimated population of one million, there are only 18 general medical practitioners, all of them males. Women are kept out of training as doctors for two reasons. Firstly, they do not have the required educational standards, hence there is need for improved science education for girls both in the primary and secondary school levels in order to prepare black female candidates for medical training. The second reason is administrative discrimination against women in the selection of candidates. Girls are encouraged to undertake para-medical training, especially nursing which is less expensive and takes fewer years to complete, thus avoiding the so-called "wastage" from marriage, drop-outs and pregnancies which are likely with long training for females.

38. MEDUNSA with about 200 students is the only institution offering para-medical training for blacks. Course offerings are dental therapy, physiotherapy, radiography, dietetics and occupational therapy. Most black women with health training are nurses and the attainment of higher levels in the nursing profession is difficult. Qualifications for black nurses for degree programmes are tighter than those for whites: blacks need both a secondary school certificate and a basic nurses qualification while whites need only the school certificate to enrol.

8/ Lauretta Ngcobo, "On Liberation and Oppression", ISIS International Bulletin (Autumn 1978), No. 9.

v) Women and Education

39. Education in South Africa is a system designed to preserve the social and political structures of apartheid. There are disparate educational systems for Africans, coloureds, Indians and whites - each to serve a particular purpose in the racist South African economy and society. For Africans a peculiar Bantu Education system was developed by the politicians of the ruling Nationalist Party in the 1950s to ensure that they could not compete with white members of South African society for jobs as equals with equal qualifications. There was real fear that full "western" education would lead to the emergence of a skilled and proficient African class conscious of its competitive ability. This would deal a death blow to the myth of white supremacy. White economic dominance could be effectively entrenched only if Africans were denied educational opportunities. Thus Africans were kept as labourers.

40. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 provided for the takeover of all African education, detaching it from the national Department of Education, Arts and Science and from the influence of liberal-minded educationalists. Bantu education was organised by white politicians who had clearly defined political objectives to mould African children according to a pre-determined pattern. The entrenched discrimination is reflected by such indicators as per capita educational expenditure and teacher/pupil ratios for the different racial groups.

Table 3. Per Capita Educational Expenditure and Teacher/Pupil Ratios in South Africa (1980/81)[9/]

Racial Group	Per Capita Expenditure (excluding capital expenditure)	Teacher/Pupil Ratio
White	Rands 913.00	1:18.2
Indian	513.00	1:24.3
Coloured	253.16	1:27.3
African (not in Bantustans)	139.66	1:39.1

41. Within the confines of Bantu education African women's entry into the school system is not restricted. The pattern of entry into school was established when missionary education was first introduced into South Africa. In the traditional sexual division of labour, boys were and are indispensable for ensuring the family livelihood. In particular they tended the live-stock, a task which could not be undertaken by the girls because of its exposed outdoor nature. But at the same time that missionaries were busy introducing schooling, the colonial administration imposed a head-tax and other levies which compelled families to send out boys and young men to work as wage labourers on settler farms and the newly discovered mines. The result was that only girls could be spared for the missionaries' crusade to civilise through Christianity and formal education. The girls

9/ Seretse Choabi, The Roots of Bantu Education (Sechaba, January 1983).

who got into the school system were channelled into a career pattern of domestic labour, teaching, nursing and social service which has persisted and been reinforced in apartheid South Africa.

42. Early childhood education today is the sole responsibility of the family. As such, it is solely by parental decision and means whether boys or girls enrol or stay out of school. The fact that girls get into the school system at an even rate with boys and often times are in the majority is indicative of neither high nor low esteem for their gender. This gives credence to African claims that women's oppression as experienced in South Africa today derives more from the apartheid state and its apparatus than from custom. There is much evidence to show that, left to the family, African women get a far better deal than as mediated by colonial racism with its socially more oppressive notions about women.

Women in Higher Education

43. While there is near parity between boys and girls in school from the ages of 6 to 17 in South Africa in contrast to many other African countries, the exigencies of life under apartheid force young African women to seek employment soon after secondary school or even before matriculation. A conscious policy has been in operation since 1954 whereby large numbers of African women are recruited as primary-school teachers on low educational requirements. Prime Minister Verwoerd explained at the time that this was necessary "in order to save money in teacher training and salaries, and also because women are generally better than men in handling small children".10/ With such stereotyped official attitudes it is not surprising that it was only within the United Nations Decade for Women that the first African woman in South Africa qualified as a civil engineer. Doctors and lawyers are coming up only at the rate of one or two per year. A few para-medics are expected to graduate from MEDUNSA. There are no black women lawyers, judges, magistrates, engineers, architects, veterinarians, chemists, pharmacists, or agriculturalists. This situation contrasts with the women of the African continent who have displayed much greater degree of diversity despite their numerical disadvantage in relation to boys in higher education.

44. The detailed review of the situation of women in South Africa within the United Nations Decade for Women, shows that, with the exception of white women whose status and rights are constitutionally guaranteed and who form part of the privileged society at the apex of the apartheid pyramid, there was a deterioration in women's position in law, employment, health and higher education. Black women suffered most through the loss of jobs, forced removals and denationalization. In Namibia with the war situation conditions for black women could be hardly better.

10/ Freda Troup, Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid (London, 1976) p. 40 quoted in "The Effects of Apartheid on the Status of Women in South Africa and Namibia" (A/CONF. 94/7/Rev.1)

B. THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN NAMIBIA

i) The Background: Territory, Population, Social and Political Structure of Namibia

45. More than 50% of Namibia's territory is desert, and the low rainfall and delicate land structure hamper agriculture. However, Namibia is endowed with the richest inshore and deep water fishing zones in tropical Africa and has vast mineral wealth in diamonds, uranium, cooper, zinc, lead, cadmium, lithium, tin, silver, wolfram and salt. These resources give the territory considerable strategic significance in international affairs. Apartheid controls and manipulations make it difficult to establish reliable population statistics. In 1981 the colonial census estimated a total population of 1,039,900 racially divided into 844,700 Africans (81.4%), 119,000 coloureds (11.4%) and 75,600 whites (7.2%). In the same year the Catholic Institute for International Relations and the British Council of Churches computed estimates from employment data and concluded that the population was about 1,480,000 broken down as follows: 1,170,000 Africans, 120,000 coloureds and 190,000 whites including some 90,000 occupation troops. 11/

46. The minority white community lives in great wealth and enjoys privileges entrenched in law. The white minority holds 38 million hectares of the best agricultural and cattle ranching land, owns 60% of the country's 3 million cattle stock, and controls the area containing the extensive and varied mineral resources. The African and coloured Namibians have little chance to escape poverty, degradation and misery to which they are institutionally bound. While the white farming community has about 1,250 hectares per head of arable land, the average for an African peasant is 5.5 hectares. Blacks earn very little from the contract labour system as the vast majority are small-scale subsistence farmers. The two most exploitative sectors, domestic service and labour on white farms, provide over 50% of black wage labour. In 1977 the average wage for a black Namibian was R 125 per annum compared to R 3000 for whites.

47. The Namibian colonial economy is controlled from South Africa to which maximum profits from industry are repatriated. But the general economic crisis in the republic, the high cost of the escalating war against SWAPO, the relentless drought and disruption in agriculture have resulted in severe economic stagnation in the 1980s. The country is presently beset with rising inflation, high prices, growing unemployment and poverty. The cost of living in urban centres in Namibia is higher than in South Africa. A survey of incomes in 1983 showed that 36% of wage earners in Windhoek lived below the household subsistence level (HSL), while in the NOrth this applied to 99% of wage earners. The employed and underemployed, estimated between 25% and 30% of the total labour force, had to live off those already in dire poverty. 12/

11/ "Namibia in the 1980's" - A CIIR/ECC Position Paper (London, 1981) p.31.

12/ Ottilia Abrahams, "Namibia Today: The International Situation", The Namibian Review No. 28, April-June 1984.

48. In political and constitutional life only the whites in Namibia elect the South West African Legislative Assembly whose power, formerly considerable, has been whittled down since 1969 when South African government departments assumed more direct control of the colony. Blacks have no franchise that relates to real power. What SWAPO calls "a cynical caricature of democracy" is being perpetrated through so-called elected boards in the reserves, Police Zone and urban locations whose executive powers are vested in colonial officials. Other so-called elections have been staged in specific rural areas in Ovamboland, Kavango and Eastern Caprivi in an attempt to improve the image of the detested Bantustan system. Such elections have met with popular rejection or with participation only through coercion.

49. Local and international pressure is forcing the racist regime to incorporate indigenous Namibians into the political life and administration of the territory in order to lend credence to its pronouncements that it indeed is preparing to hand over power to the Namibians. In 1982 the whole effort collapsed when the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) disintegrated following the resignation of its president, Peter Kalangula. The next move was to try and establish an interim government with power in the hands of senior military advisers under the administrator-general. The plan involved ethnic representation, and the dissolution of the National Assembly which would be replaced by an advisory body of political parties, representatives of white agriculture, commerce, industry, mining and church interests. The plan could not take off because Danie Hough, the then Administrator-General, failed to draw in the internal political parties. On the other hand South Africa could not find any black leader with sufficient credibility around whom this interim government could be constructed. Pretoria moved back to re-impose direct colonial rule through a new administrator-general who was equipped with a strong team of military advisers. Thus South Africa continues to enforce militarily its foreign colonial rule of Namibia, while trying also to convince Namibians and the international community that it is diligently preparing Namibia for independence and self-determination.

50. SWAPO has given a direct challenge to South Africa's pretence and oppression on ideological, political and social grounds. The overwhelming popular support which SWAPO enjoys among the Namibian people by 1978 enabled it to establish control over areas in the north of the country where South African troops were reluctant to go. South Africa has responded with increased military occupation of Namibia costing billions of Rands. In 1979 more than 60,000 troops were engaged in fighting SWAPO freedom fighters; by 1981 the number had risen to 80,000. The General-Secretary of the Lutheran World Ministries who visited Namibia in 1979 stressed that "evidence of South African army brutality among all segments of the population is overwhelming, pervasive and capable of documentation." 13/

51. The huge financial cost, coupled with popular resistance, the intensified armed struggle and international pressure has forced South Africa to the negotiation table. For its own interests South Africa wishes to see the Namibian question resolved, but not at the expense of losing its own ideological, political and economic position. In 1980 after SWAPO and South Africa had agreed to comply, United Nations Security Council resolution 435 (1978) was accepted as the basis for a settlement of Namibia's independence. But since the Geneva talks of 1981 South Africa has thrown one obstacle after another in the path of a negotiated outcome - notably United Nations impartiality and/or constitutional guarantees. The 1982 demand for the withdrawal of Cubans from Angola as a pre-condition, together with

13/ International Defence and Aid Fund Namibia: the Facts (London, 1980), P.54

United States complicity in this issue, has shifted the nature of the negotiations. Today Namibian independence and self-determination is linked to a settlement in Angola favourable to South Africa and the West. For South Africa, whose narrow social base in Namibia guarantees a SWAPO victory in free and fair elections, this linkage with Angola is a welcome trump card, "for while all previous issues were 'dangerously' close to resolution within months, this one promised to take years". 14/ While Angola is held ransom in this fashion, South Africa continues its illegal occupation of Namibia and its social injustices which force the men, women and children of Namibia, like those in South Africa, to live in conditions that negate the United Nations Decade for Women goals of Equality, Development and Peace.

ii) The Constitutional and Political Position of Women

52. Namibian women have not yet acquired their legal majority status. When South Africa took over the administration of the colony, she extended all of its repressive laws into Namibia both directly and through the control it maintains over local institutions. The colonial constitutional arrangement makes the politico-legal status of women in Namibia (both black and white) the preserve of the apartheid rulers. As in South Africa, the African women's position is further undermined by custom and tradition which are distorted and enforced by apartheid's "tribal" authorities as a means of promoting the Bantustan policy.

Influx Control and Migratory Labour

53. The key politico-legal mechanisms which have structured the majority of women's condition in Namibia are the influx control laws which support the migratory labour system and Bantustan residential policy. Through the influx control laws, the regime has systematically denied, particularly to women, the right to settle where jobs are available. It is only in times of capitalist industrial expansion that constraints which restrict women's mobility or which enforce their seclusion are relaxed because they are detrimental to business' need for cheap labour. Once women are no longer required as labour new ideologies are invoked to demobilize them back to domestic labour and the reserves.

54. As in South Africa, the bars' effects of the migratory labour and influx control system in Namibia lead to split families with women eduring heavy responsibilities as de facto heads of households and wives exhausted by loneliness, waiting and despair. Because of impoverished agricultural conditions in the Bantustan reserves women cannot produce sufficient food to feed their families and have to rely on remittances from working male relatives who alone have access to wage labour. This increased dependence has reduced women's standing in society and deepened their exploitation.

Foreign Armed Occupation and Women

55. The position of the majority of women has deteriorated further as a result of the armed occupation of Namibia by the South African forces. Women have no

14/ South Africa Review (1983), p.35

protection against the accelerated forced removals, daily acts of intimidation, rape and murder. When South Africa decided in 1975/76 to form a "Free Fire Zone" one kilometre in width along the Namibia-Angola border in response to increased SWAPO resistance, many peasants lost their homes and property. Reports indicate that the South African Police carried out a wholesale destruction of villages and crops; up to 50,000 civilians were forcibly moved from their homes. The occupation troops have tried in vain to stop the intense resistance of SWAPO's People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) whose success is based on the support it receives from the community. Therefore in the past seven years South Africa has directed its attention to the community, with special attention to women. It is argued that Freedom Fighters are successful in their strikes against the occupation troops because local women support them with food, shelter, communications and other logistics. Women therefore are subjected to extreme violence, rape and public killings in the war zone.

56. Rape is one of the fastest growing crimes in the country. In June 1980 an 80 year-old woman was raped by a 20 year-old South African soldier and had to be hospitalized for excessive bleeding. The soldier, who pleaded innocence, was acquitted, but later boasted to a reporter that he had lied to escape punishment. A 16 year-old school girl was raped by two soldiers on military duty at Katima Mulilo, and each was sentenced to only two years imprisonment. In March 1983 at Miershoop military base, a white South African Defence Force sergeant stripped naked a woman detainee who was held for interrogation and after chaining her to a pole instructed two black soldiers to rape her under threat of dismissal if they refused. His defence was that the chaining was to prevent escape and that the victim suffered no physical or mental injury, even though she was pregnant. The three were sentenced to two years imprisonment only. In June 1983 two members of the Koevoet Police Unit spit-roasted alive a 63 year-old peasant while raping his 60 year-old wife. They were fined fifty rands each. In all such cases the criminals receive very lenient sentences on the excuse that this was a "war situation". 15/ The brutality and paralysing fear have displaced hundreds of thousands of Namibians, mostly women and children, inside the country or forced them into exile as refugees.

iii) Women and Employment

The Bantustans and Subsistence Agriculture

57. The reserve economies are dependent on small-scale agriculture, but they have long lost their self-sufficiency. Soil erosion resulting from overgrazing has forced many peasants to enlist for work in the white farming areas and in the urban centres. There are no significant border industries except around the Police Zone where mainly men are recruited. Women in the reserves cannot make a living from subsistence production. Few peasant farmers can produce enough food to keep themselves the year round. Hunger haunts many peasant families especially in northern Namibia, while the police zone reserves are little more than dustbowls. They are practically dumping grounds for the elderly, the sick and disabled, women and children who are perpetually undernourished. Even those with access to small allotments of land must depend on the remittances of migrant workers to escape hunger and malnutrition.

15/ Anti-Apartheid Women's Committee Newsletter, No. 15 (July-August 1984

Wage labour

58. Some black Namibian women who manage to slip through the influx control net secure precarious residential rights in towns or on white farms, But such rights are usually dependent on male workers who qualify to be in town. For these women there is little work opportunity outside domestic labour which was a male domain until very recently. Of the 75,000 domestic servants in Namibia in 1981 around two-thirds were women. This changing pattern of employment for women is ascribed not only to men's incorporation into industry, but also to the war and the security situation. Whites, who are the main employers of privatised domestic labour, have become increasingly insecure about male labour as the urban guerrilla war escalates. Many have decided to replace their male servants with presumably more docile and apolitical female labour or to do without servants altogether. But domestic service for women as an employment option in Namibia has the same constraints as in South Africa of patronage, humiliation, and exploitation.

59. For domestic servants there are no maternity benefits and no paid sick leave. Most expectant women go to their mothers in the impoverished rural areas for pre- and post-natal support. Rural health care is rudimentary, and starvation and malnutrition are rampant. Wages of women in domestic service are not always guaranteed. In some cases domestic servants are not even paid in money, but are given left-over meals and supplied with ragged and unwanted clothing. 16/ For the women who are paid, the standard wage of R 125 to R 200 per annum is so low that they cannot run a home and feed their children in a normal way. The results again are malnutrition and disease because often there is no other source of income.

60. White agriculture is a large employer of black Namibians. The annual wages, ranging between R 250 and R 400 are low, and include payment in kind, namely food and shelter. Not surprisingly apartheid gradations exist within the work-force. Contract workers from the North are paid lower than local urban African workers from the police Zone; the latter are paid less than coloured and Rehoboth workers who earn less than white employees. Black women in all categories of work earn far less than their male counterparts.

Manufacturing, Industry and Service Sectors

61. In the past decade and perhaps earlier a growing number of young and predominantly single women have been absorbed into the expanding urban service sector such as shops and offices. Others have been incorporated into the manufacturing sector, particularly in clothing and food processing industries. Their numbers are still very small, and documentation which reveals gender distribution is still scant. Although labour statistics on Namibia including wages are increasingly available, there is still no classification by sex and age in most instances. What is apparent is that black women's entry into the labour force in Namibia appears to be following the same pattern as took place earlier in South Africa in terms of sectors and racial distribution. Educated women are channeled into teaching and nursing with increasing numbers moving into government administration.

16/ N.S. Hishongwa, Women of Namibia (Vimmerby, 1983)

62. The major source of income for the urban women outside the official labour force is the informal sector of small-scale income-generating undertakings both legal and those discouraged by the local administration, such as illicit beer-brewing and shebeen keeping, basket making and sales and handicrafts. Among these informal sector workers are many of the women who have been compelled to migrate into the urban centres recently. Many of those women have entered a shifting, rootless existence with their children, living as illegal lodgers or prostitutes in the townships or in the migrant workers' hostels. Unemployment is endemic now in Namibia, and women are among those hardest hit.

iv) Women and Health

63. Women's physical and mental health is closely bound up with the health of their families and especially the health of their children. Hence the rate of infant mortality of a country is an indicator not only of the health status and care of the society at large but also of the socio-economic and health condition of the mothers. There are no national statistics on infant mortality, but available evidence shows that the rates follow the racial structure in Namibia. Independent research by a doctor in the coloured township of Khomasdal in 1981 showed the infant mortality rates per 1000 babies 0-12 months to be 21.6 for whites, 145.0 for coloureds and 163.0 for Africans. Similar rates were found in Windhoek. 17/

64. The major causes of death are gastro-enteritis, malnutrition, measles and childhood infections that are medically preventable. In Windhoek for the period 1976-81 40% of all pregnancies among Africans and 28% among coloureds which went beyond the 28th week resulted in death of the children before the age of five years. The figure for blacks was 7 times that for whites. Perinatal mortality (i.e. death around the period of birth) is a function of two related factors: a) the level of antenatal and obstetric health care and b) the health of the mother. Most black women continue to do physical work during the last trimester of pregnancy because they do not have access to social security or paid leave. In any event many women are themselves weak and undernourished and therefore prone to this repetitive problem.

Family Planning or Genocide

65. Maternal mortality and morbidity in Namibia reflect the differential health care available to women under the repressive apartheid legislation and social policies. Under anti-abortion laws enforced by the South West Africa administration, women have to appeal for abortion on medical or psychiatric grounds. The decision and approval are racially and socially determined with the result that white women generally have far easier access to safe abortion either at home or abroad. Coloured and black women risk all the dangers of backstreet abortions.

66. The apartheid policies in Namibia intrude directly into women's rights over their reproductive functions. Among whites the principal forms of birth control are contraceptive pills and condoms. These are either provided by private practitioners or obtained directly from pharmacies. Among blacks and

17/ Namibia Today, 1981, p.57; M.K. Duggal (ed.), Health Sector Policy Options for Independent Namibia, Namibia Studies Series, No. 7, pp. 15-22

[illegible] infamous progesterone depo provera injections are advocated. The injections are given to women without explanation and without being told of the possible side effects. No history regarding heart disease, deep veins, thrombosis or high blood pressure is taken before administering the drug. [illegible] maintain that forceful and concealed sterilizations are being carried out on both men and women in hospitals and clinics with the clear aim of reducing the black population in Namibia. 19/

Health Care, Nutrition and the Apartheid War

67. In Namibia poor nutrition is not merely caused by inadequate food production which it is - or by ignorance of the value of foodstuffs. "Quite simply the majority of blacks and coloureds, through deliberate social policy, can no longer produce enough food for their needs, and they receive wages too low to make up the shortfall. This poverty is the outcome of the particular form of economic development in Namibia. The subsistence farming of all skin colour (racial) groups except whites has been militarily undermined through appropriation of land and mass removals". 20/ Health services are organized along racial lines with services for the black majority rudimentary and in many areas virtually non-existent, while whites enjoy full medical services. In one example from the town of Okahandja in 1981 there was one bed for every 150 whites in a fully equipped hospital compared with one bed for 3,330 blacks in a basic clinic run by a nursing sister.

68. The war in Namibia has brought devastating consequences for communities at large and for women in particular because they are the majority users of medical and social services. In Ovamboland in particular clinics have been burnt down and sick people have to walk up to 50 kilometres for medical attention. Existing community health services and mission hospitals have been crippled by South Africa's military operations. Doctors and nurses have in some cases been attacked, detained and tortured for alleged collaboration with the Freedom Fighters. The result is a shortage of skilled civilian medical personnel. This in turn has given South Africa the opportunity to place national servicemen into health centres, thus making the population in the North almost completely dependent on the [illegible] security forces for medical treatment.

Health Personnel

69. Most black Namibian women working in the health sector are nurses. The majority qualify only as post-standard VI assistant nurses or post-standard VIII general nurses. The South African Nursing Council set the criteria for the profession and the minimum standards of education required have precluded blacks and coloureds from training in nursing until very recently. This had led to a serious shortage of nurses everywhere in Namibia except in Ovamboland where nurses from the Transkei Bantustan in South

18/ Anti-Apartheid Women's Committee Newsletter, op.cit, p.4

19/ Interview with Ms Pendukeni Kaulinge, Luanda, May 1984.

20/ Barbara Konig, Namibia: The Ravages of War (London, 1983), pp.34-37

Africa had been recruited to work in rural hospitals and clinics since 1960. In effect apartheid South Africa denationalizes black nurses and forces them back into the "homelands" where they cannot find employment. It then deploys them into apartheid Namibia to take up jobs which are denied to the local black population. This practice has caused much ill-feeling between Namibian nurses and the Bantustan recruits. Together with whites these recruits take up 80% of posts for registered nurses. They also pose a problem for the Freedom Fighters who are compelled to see them as collaborators of South Africa's oppressive system in Namibia and therefore a potential target for PLAN.

70. There is considerable discontent among black nurses regarding discrimination not only in working conditions, such as disparate salaries and geographical posting, but also in training. Just as in South Africa whites can train at university level for the Diploma in Nursing directly from secondary school without the basic general certificate in nursing which is required of black nurses. A programme has been instituted in Katutura where African and coloured nurses are taught how to diagnose and treat common conditions. But the real objective is to reduce the work load of the white doctors, without training more African and coloured doctors.

v) Women and Education

71. For Namibians, be they women small farmers or male migrant workers or those living in the townships, education has assumed a great importance as a potential escape route from poverty. Wage labour is seen as a way out, and increasingly this wage labour requires at least a basic education. Investment in the education of children made at great sacrifice is seen a means of securing their future and shielding them from the poverty experienced by the parents. In 1982 the enrollment in black schools was around 200,000 or nearly 16% of the black population. However, since the early 1970s a pattern was established whereby the vast majority remained in the lower-primary levels. Thus in 1980 there were 71% black pupils in the lower primary schools, 22% in the upper primary and 7% in secondary and vocational training. Reasons for the high drop-out rate and irregular attendance include poverty, malnutrition and poor health, poor teaching and racially offensive curricula, inadequate teaching materials, parents' need for domestic help and escape from conscription carried out at schools. 21/

72. Girls' entry into the school system corresponds with the general pattern within the country as well as with the gender distribution within the southern African region. In 1981 girls outnumbered boys by 7000 at the primary level and by 2000 at the junior secondary levels. But the situation is reversed at senior secondary, teacher training and social work training levels. There were no girls in technical training which had enrolled 97 boys. The drop-out rate is drastic for both sexes. However it is decisive in determining women's small numbers at the post secondary training levels such as university and technical colleges and therefore women's lower status in employment.

73. The school system is discriminatory at the core. It is based on South Africa's Bantu Education Act of 1953 whose objectives are to train blacks for subservient jobs allocated to them by the white economy. "There is no place for

21/ Justin Ellie, Education, Repression and Liberation: A Future for Namibia (London, 1984), P. 36

the native in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour."22/ The official corollary of this is that whites must be educated and trained for race superiority. In a way it is naively optimistic of blacks to expect this kind of education to liberate them from ill-paid menial labour. According to the 1977 restructuring of the Namibian Administration each ethnic (second tier) government is responsible for the primary and secondary education of a particular population or language group. The effect of these ethnic divisions is to perpetuate segregation and the inequalities of the educational system. Thus in the 1982/83 financial year, R 1,762 was budgeted for one white pupil, R 673 for a coloured pupil, and for the Africans, R 398 per Nama child, R 324 per Damara and R 368 per Baster.

74. There is no university as yet in Namibia. Qualifying students are channelled to apartheid South Africa with blacks going to the South African tribal colleges. In 1980 the first non-racial Academy for Tertiary Education was established in Windhoek to provide post-junior secondary certificate courses in commerce and school subjects, and post-matric University courses under the University of South Africa. Other adult education programmes have been established as well. However, women do not feature in any of these new developments in higher education because many dropout or are channelled into women's traditional professions of nursing and teaching with low qualifications and correspondingly low salaries and benefits. Most women teachers are located at the lowest levels of the profession. Despite their equal entry into the school system with the boys, the girls do not seem to sustain their advantage. A combination of traditional attitudes and apartheid's particular repression and exploitation have produced this result.

75. The United Nations Decade for Women has been marked by a desperate deterioration in the conditions of life for women in Namibia. Poor black women in particular have no protection in law under a ruthless military occupation in which their dignity, humanity and very lives, together with those of their children, are severely threatened. Educational and employment opportunities are curtailed by repressive racist laws, and social and health services are crippled by the war against self determination.

PART II. WOMEN'S RESISTANCE AGAINST APARTHEID AND THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

A. SOUTH AFRICA

76. The United Nations Decade for Women coincided with the intensification of resistance against apartheid. The irrepressible black popular opposition to apartheid following the 1976 Soweto massacre, the success of national liberation in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the armed and guerrilla offensive by the Namibian and South African National Liberation Movements and the international drive to isolate the apartheid regime have all given encouragement to internal and external resistance movements by students, women and trade unions.

Women in the Trade Union Movement

77. As occurred with the introduction of education at the turn of the century, African women had a relative headstart on their menfolk in trade union participation. A combination of factors made this possible - the legal/political restrictions imposed by successive racist colonial administrations on male labour was perhaps

22/ Freda Troup: Forbidden Pastures - Education Under Apartheid (London, 1976)

the most important. Under the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act, for purposes of negotiating only non-pass holders were defined as "employees" and as such could belong to registered trade unions. All African men were pass-bearers, but women were not then obliged to carry passes and so many of them joined registered trade unions. In these unions they acquired extensive organizational and leadership skills. When African women were later forced to carry passes they joined forces with the men in non-recognized unions. The experience appears to have radicalized them. It sharpened their general understanding of social events and their mobilizing skills. They are now part of a massive trade union movement which has broad economic and political objectives aimed against the apartheid system.

78. The impact of the Decade would seem to have been the sharpening of women's awareness of women-specific problems. Thus one of the major issues raised today within the trade union movement is the establishment of women's departments, which will focus attention on the special needs and demands of working women. Maternity leave, equal pay and child care are raised by trade unions such as the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union and by the Council of Unions of South Africa. Small, but deliberate, steps are taken to encompass economic sectors which employ mostly women, such as domestic labour, farm workers, teachers and nurses, and border industries. Most women working in these areas are excluded from the new labour legislation and therefore still require basic rights like the right to organize, a minimum wage and human living and working conditions.

79. In July 1983 the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) organized a workshop on women workers. The five FOSATU organizers who spoke stressed the needs of rural and urban women workers, particularly the burdens of their double day at the work place and at home. They also pointed out that, although women had shown real courage and commitment to trade unions, there was not one national union that had elected a woman president or chairperson. It was generally agreed that traditional and stereotyped attitudes largely contributed to this. 23/ On the other hand, certain imperatives of women's lives affected their union participation and assumption of certain responsibilities. Married women with children find it difficult to attend union meetings which take place mostly in the evenings. It is unsafe for women to walk about alone at night. Attending meetings makes it a triple day for many women and often leads to family conflicts. Thus many women shop stewards often retreat because they cannot afford to lose their homes and family because of trade union work. Official repression, arrests and bannings also intimidate women unionists, and it is a credit to them that the militancy of organized female labour continues.

Women in Resistance Associations

80. Women joined the youth, religious and sporting organizations and trade unions in the popular resistance and united mass action culminating in the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) on 20 August 1983. The UDF Declaration insisted on this unity of the people in opposing apartheid, boycotting the elections for the tri-cameral parliament and demanding a democratic society free of Bantustans and Group Areas. Mrs Albertina Sisulu, President of the Federation of South African Women, was elected Joint National President of the UDF while in jail awaiting trial. A major influence in building up the spirit of unity in the UDF to fight apartheid, she firmly believes that all the races are there to stay and so must work together for a non-racist South Africa. The parallel organization, the National Forum, which grew up at the same time as the UDF also relies upon the participation of women, students and

23/ Speak, No. 401232; South African Labour Bulletin, vol. 9 No. 3 (1983)

workers. Having identified "racial capitalism" as the real enemy of black people, the National Forum aims to replace racist apartheid with a non-racial socialist policy. However it rejects [illegible] Whites in the struggle for liberation.

81. Many women's organizations have appeared within the United Nations Decade to resist apartheid generally, raise the consciousness of women and fight for certain specific social and economic goals. For example, the Federation of South African Women (FSAW), based mainly in the Transvaal, has organized campaigns against increases in rent and food prices. It has given both moral and material support to squatter residents and organized seminars focussing on the plight of women in South Africa, especially relating to health, education, housing, pass laws and forced removals. The United Women's Organization (UWO) formed in 1979 in the Western Cape Province, resisted threats of arrest from the Bantu Police authorities and adopted a comprehensive policy document in 1981 calling for the removal of racial and sexual oppression, for equitable education, housing and social amenities, full trade union rights, the end to discriminatory and oppressive domestic service and farm labour conditions and equal rights and status in marriage laws. The UWO has spread into the Eastern Cape Province. Its recent resistance activities have included opposition to military training for school children through the so-called "camping trips" organized by the South African Defence Force. The indomitable Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), church women's groups, black and white women students' collectives and numerous other organizations are actively engaged in the resistance and struggle. The Black Sash, composed of dedicated white women, merits particular mention for its comprehensive crusade against the pass laws and forced mass removals. The organization disseminates educative materials on these issues and has set up advice bureaux in the main urban centres to help victims of influx control laws.

82. The apartheid state machinery has singled out women like Mrs Albertina Sisulu, Mrs Nomzamo Winnie Mandela and many others for its repressive attention because of their fearless championship of the liberation struggle. They are of all ages and colours, they have suffered and continue to suffer frequent arrests, detentions, bannings, long and short-term imprisonment, often with isolation. Their numbers seem to have increased during the United Nations Decade for Women. The score or more such heroines of the struggle presently known to be in prison range in ages from 19 to over 50 and have sentences from 1 to 15 years.

Right Wing Women's Reaction

83. As some women sacrifice their lives to remove apartheid from South African society, other women organize to resist change. Many white women have thus given a racist response to the goals of the Decade and mobilized to uphold apartheid. The Kappie Kommando is an all women warlike, underground commando comprising African-speaking recruits only led by Maria Van Zyl. Its English-speaking parallel is Dr. Irene Buchanan's White Sash. The White Sash has a crippling fear that the recent so-called constitutional reforms of then Prime Minister (now President) P.W. Botha are a plot of the white men to "sell" the country to blacks. This would inevitably lead to war, according to Dr Buchanan, "killing all our men and leaving the White Christian women and children at the mercy of the blacks". Therefore the White Sash has proposed a closure of all of South Africa's borders "to stop all assistance being given to our enemies and the terrorists by the Government." The Organization is also firmly opposed to integration in South Africa and the democratic vote. 24/ On its part the Kappie Kommando is linked to right-wing male groups which have accused the government of reneging on apartheid. Through regular cells, which they have renamed wage-paste ("guard posts") to sound less cold and communist, the women defenders of apartheid mobilized in the last white elections to ensure the election of right wing candidates.

24/ See You Have Struck a Rock: Women and Political Repression in South Africa (International Defence and Aid Fund, July 1980), also The Star (Johannesburg), 25/3/81

Women in Exile

54. The repression of the apartheid regime and the physical and psychological warfare have forced many men, women and children to leave South Africa and Namibia to seek refuge and protection in supportive African and other countries. The frontline States, in particular, have made heavy sacrifices to oppose apartheid and give moral, political and material support to the national liberation movements in southern Africa. Such opposition does not only undermine South Africa's political goals but also threatens its plans for economic domination in the region. The regime desperately needs good trade relations with independent African countries in order to create an outlet for its goods and technology, especially in this period of its economic crisis. These are the reasons why it has continued to use coercive measures against the neighbouring States and resorted to a strategy of political and economic destabilization in southern Africa.

55. In the rapidly deteriorating security situation men, women and children from the national liberation movements and the frontline States have suffered various forms of aggression, harassment and death. The recent casualties include 13 people killed when the South African Defence Forces invaded the Matola suburb of Maputo, Mozambique, in January 1981. In July the same year the Chief Representative of the African National Congress (ANC) was assassinated in Zimbabwe by South African agents, and in December 1980 two South African refugees were burnt in a car on Swazi soil after a still unexplained car chase. A refugee was kidnapped from Botswana in 1982. The massacre in Maseru on 9 December 1982 left 12 Basotho and 30 refugees, including a 15 year old boy dead. Women are among the direct targets of this aggression. Dora, a trade unionist and her husband died in a car bomb in Swaziland in 1982. Ruth First, an ex-detainee and scholar, received a faxed letter bomb in Maputo in 1982 and in June 1983 Jeanette Schoon was killed by a bomb in Angola. Joyce Dipale was shot at several times at her home in the middle of the night in Botswana but survived by defending herself.

56. Bravely women in exile have joined hands with the men in intensifying their struggle to eradicate apartheid and liberate their country. They participate in specific self-reliance projects for sustaining their communities; they design and form the brickworks for nation-building using both the pen and the sword. Many women have mobilized as integral parts of and through specific women's divisions within their liberation movements for the general struggle and for the purpose of motivating other women into action.

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania: Integration Strategy

57. The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) believes that women cannot be advanced in isolation because the struggle for self-determination and national liberation is borne both by men and women. Emphasis is therefore placed on the integration of women in all programmes of nation-building

and the struggle. The PAC has thus resisted the creation of a women's wing or detachment. Citing the organization's constitution, Elizabeth Sibeko, a member of the Central Committee of PAC, has stressed the need for equal participation for equally oppressed men and women. She acknowledges that PAC offices are basically run by male comrades but women are encouraged to participate in the administration as deputies to the representatives and do their work efficiently. Through political and ideological education that encourages women's active participation, their leadership is expected to rise in all spheres. 25/

88. The PAC recognizes that women's oppression under apartheid is the most extreme and that women are the worst victims of poverty, displacement and dispossession. It strives therefore to equip women to play their role in all fields as effective members of society. 26/ In 1983 the position of Co-ordinator of Women's Programmes was created to facilitate the monitoring of the full integration of women in all sectors of the movement such as in education, publicity, culture, health, welfare, the army as well as the social advancement of small children and older women in the transit camps. The PAC Department of Education takes care of all education and has placed emphasis on women's activities in all training centres. A self-reliance and training programme involving child care and income-generating activities has been developed by the women. Otherwise women in the PAC are to be found in the Central Committee and in all departments according to their skills.

The African National Congress of South Africa: Self-reliance Strategy

89. The ANC has a much longer history in the mobilisation of women into the liberation struggle against apartheid. A Women's League was created as a mobilizing and organizing instrument both for national liberation and to rid the nation of what the President of the ANC, O.R. Tambo has called "traditionalist, conservative and primitive restraints imposed on women by men-dominated structures ... equally traditionalist attitudes of surrender and submission on the part of women". 27/ In order to pay tribute to the struggling women and their historic achievements and to draw the attention of the international community to the continuing oppression, the ANC observed 1984 as the Year of the Women of South Africa.

90. Within the ANC, women have been integrated at all levels, but many more need to come forward to take up the available positions. In the manpower development area, the diversity and skills levels of women within the movement already outstrips South Africa's 332-year old record. There are women civil, aeronautic, water and agricultural engineers, micro-biologists, dentists and various types of technicians besides the traditional nurses and teachers. A large number of women also form part of Umkhonto We Sizwe (the People's Army) and engage in its operations as well as men. Self-reliance projects within the movement are communally run but the Women's Section pays particular attention to the initiation and progress of creches, nursery schools, hostels for expectant and young mothers and the ideological and cultural programme of Masupatsela (ANC pioneers). There is now a well developed day care centre (Charlotte Maxeke) with resident mothers and children, a nursery and several creches in the region. Women also participate in tailoring, health, small industries, animal husbandry, crop production, catering, and educational projects of the exile communities.

25/ See Izania Today, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1980)

26/ Interview with Edgar Motau, Education officer, PAC Headquarters, Dar es Salaam, April 1984.

27/ Closing Address by President General of ANC to Conference of the Women's Section held in Luanda, Angola, September 1981.

B. NAMIBIA

91 Under successive colonial regimes in Namibia the popular protest movement took the form of passive resistance, demonstrations and petitioning of international organizations against colonial rule itself and issues like taxation without representation, the contract labour system and racial discrimination. This movement produceed a new leadership of men and women who began to assert more insistently their right to live in a free country and to be themselves. The protest movement gave women a platform which had the capacity to integrate their desire for national liberation as well as address the various problems which they experienced as women.

92. The turn of the century saw a poignant example of women's collective resolve when Herero women decided not to bear any more children while German rule lasted in their homeland. This protest was expressed after the genocide perpetuated by the German army against the Herero people in 1903-1905. The women also took a collective stand against domestic service which they considered degrading. But the most recent landmark in women's protest was the demonstration and passive resistance of 10 December 1959 which led to the Windhoek massacre. On that day the community demonstrated against the forced removal of Africans from their traditional and fertile residential area of Windhoek to the new Katutura location. A woman was shot dead as she tried to set fire to a policevan and in the violence that erupted more than ten people were killed and over fifty seriously injured by police action. The incident is now commemorated as Namibia Women's Day.

93. Sustained mass activity inevitably led to the formation of organized political resistance. In 1959 the South West African National Union (SWANU) was founded in Windhoek with the express aim of uniting the people into one national front. In April 1960, SWAPO was founded through the enlargement of the Ovamboland People's Organization (OPO) of 1957. The central objective was to free the territory from colonial oppression and all forms of exploitation. Rather than form their own organizations, the women worked within the framework of these movements. When the apartheid machinery intensified its repression, male activists were forced to flee into neighbouring countries. Women left in the country were tortured, detained, raped and molested so that they would disclose the whereabouts of their men.

94. Women and girls in Namibia constituted themselves into a vital and effective support network in all phases of the struggle and became progressively politicized. By the 1970s SWAPO women were taking an active part in organizing and addressing political rallies to educate the people. They mobilized thousands of women militants, but their leaders were subjected to continuous harassment, arrests, torture and imprisonment. Notable among them were Gertrude Kandanga and Rauna Namdinga. 28/

SWAPO Women's Council

95. In order to encourage the masses of women to participate more actively, the SWAPO Consultative Congress held in Tanga, Tanzania, in 1969 decided to establish a forum within which women could be mobilized to deepen their political understanding of the national liberation struggle. Gertrude Kandanga became the first Chairperson of the SWAPO Women's Council (SWC) in 1969, but it was not until 1976 that the SWC was formally inaugurated as a wing of SWAPO with its own constitution and a secretariat.

28/ See To Honour Women's Day: Profiles of Leading Women in the South African and Namibian Liberation Struggles (IDAF in cooperation with UN Centre Against Apartheid), August 1981; also Focus, op.cit.

The inauguration of the SWC was timely because from the early 1970s young women were drawn into the struggle in unprecedented numbers. They were an energetic and militant force, having recently confronted the South African occupation forces within the turbulent school boycotts and forced removals. They were also women who could question more seriously the ideology which legitimized their double opression as blacks and as women. Their impact on the newly streamlined SWC was to be felt both inside and outside Namibia.

96. In 1976 five women were elected to the SWAPO Central Committee. The dynamic Ms Pendukeni Kaulinge, a product of the militancy of the 1970s, was appointed to head the SWC secretariat. In January 1980 the SWC held its first historic congress in Angola in which the women reaffirmed their total commitment to the national liberation struggle, including the armed struggle, in view of the deteriorating economic, political and military situation in Southern Africa.

Women in Exile

97. SWAPO's activities inside and outside Namibia are effectively linked and coordinated. Projects initiated by SWAPO internationally benefit both the exile community and the occupied villagers through SWAPO's political and armed resistance machineries. This framework has enabled the SWC in exile to pursue its aims and objectives which include the development of women's capabilities in productive work, education, technical skills, administration and creative cultural activity. The SWC has undertaken many developmental projects in critical fields such as health care, child care, nutrition, adult functional literacy and agricultural co-operatives to supplement broader projects undertaken by various SWAPO departments. These programmes are based mostly in the large refugee settlements in the various frontline States as well as inside Namibia. In Angola alone there are an estimated 70,000 Namibian refugees under the care of SWAPO. Of these 60% are female and 40% are male, mostly school children. By virtue of the demographic composition of the population, all SWAPO projects for social and productive development have mainly women and children as the target population. Thus 80% of the general budget of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia for upgrading and remedial education for Namibians in Angola benefits mainly women. As the SWAPO school system develops, more and more women are breaking the apartheid barriers and acquiring a wide range of skills and professions, especially at the UNIN.

98. The SWC has noticed that some of the larger SWAPO projects oriented towards remedial and/or upgrading activities exclude certain categories of women like the illiterate, the elderly and young nursing mothers who feel unable to participate. The Council has therefore designed projects to meet the needs of such women through literacy training, nutrition workshops, field attachments and practical skills training. The SWC provides the greater part of the social services in the Namibian refugee camps in accordance with SWAPO's policy of self-reliance. In the provision of free health and social services for all, considerable success has been achieved, and for the first time refugees receive the health care they had been deprived of in their occupied country. However as South Africa's bombings and threats of attacks on SWAPO settlements increase, more women and children are forced to flee to refugee camps where they need military protection as well as basic necessities of food, shelter, clothing and medications.

99. Apartheid has wreaked chaos in the fabric of society in South Africa and Namibia and consequently the liberation movements look ahead to the building of new nations with many questions facing them. SWAPO and the SWC are asking some of these questions now. What will be the response to the demands of the peasantry whose economic base has long been destroyed, of the poorly paid workers, of the youth demanding universal education currently denied them, of all classes of society for higher wages, better housing, better transport, better health services, etc.? How will women fare in the reconstruction and redistribution of resources? Aware of the African experience, SWAPO and the SWC have stressed that true liberation cannot end with the attainment of state power. Apartheid must be removed; but it should be realized that the structures of exploitation on which colonial domination was built have been systematically and deeply embedded in the colonized society.29/ SWAPO and the SWC accordingly are intensifying their diplomatic and armed offensive to eject the occupation forces out of Namibia. But as part of their forward-looking strategies, they are also intensifying their programme in education, training and manpower development. In this effort the Nationhood Programme under the United Nations Council for Namibia is a key element. The United Nations Institute for Namibia has also launched the "Namibia Studies Series" to provide the data base for future policy and action in all fields as well as the detailed strategies for structural change.

C. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

100. The crucial roles being played by the United Nations and its various bodies and agencies, the African frontline States, the OAU and the international community in the struggle to eradicate apartheid are well-known. Their moral, political and material support to the struggling people within the oppressed countries and in exile is also equally known. In the specific context of women, several international conferences have been held during the United Nations Decade for Women which have helped to focus greater attention on the complex issues and seek support for the redress of wrongs against their humanity. The most recent was the International Conference on Women and Apartheid held in Brussels in May 1982, and organized by the Special Committee against Apartheid in cooperation with the International Committee of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia. The establishment of this International Committee in 1981, under the Presidency of Mme Jeanne-Martin Cisse of Guinea, and the proclamation that year of 9 August as International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia have contributed to increased awareness on the part of women themselves inside the two countries and in the world. The Task Force on Women and Children of the Special Committee against Apartheid has also done much work in awareness building through its meetings and solidarity tours. But more effort is required by Africa and the international community to make the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women a reality in South Africa and Namibia.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

101. Apartheid has placed women in South Africa and Namibia in an intolerable situation where, with the exception of white women, they suffer the greatest constitutional, economic, social and cultural repression. The regime that refused to recognize the International Women's Year and the Decade for Women could hardly be expected to involve itself in policies and programmes to achieve equality, development and peace for women. The apartheid political economy stands for the negation of these objectives for all women and men whose race, as defined by the system, is not white.

29/ To Be Born a Nation, op.cit., p.293; SWAPO Women's Council Conference Paper, SS-83/CONF. 619/6, p.35

102. Severe economic crisis and stagnation, irrepressible internal and external resistance, the high cost of counter-insurgency and anti-liberation wars and persistent international condemnation have all combined in the last few years to force the Pretoria regime to set in motion a cynical process of so-called reforms in South Africa and internal solution in Namibia. But apartheid cannot be reformed: it must be eradicated. The Security Council has denounced the new racist constitution in South Africa as null and void. It continues to insist on the attainment of independence by Namibia on the basis of its resolution 435 (1978). The oppressed men and women of South Africa and Namibia who find their conditions of life deteriorating every year have intensified their resistance against apartheid and struggle for national liberation. The cost to them in human lives and misery is as stupendous as the repression is great.

103. The racially punitive structure of opportunities and social burdens has meant that black women of South Africa and Namibia have experienced the most chaos in their lives during the Decade. The Apartheid laws have continued to lower their status; they have denationalized them en mass and forcibly removed them as "superfluous appendages" into Bantustans which are arid enclaves of poverty and disease. Racism has given them a differentiated access to employment and put a ceiling on their occupational mobility so that they work mainly in the lowest paid menial jobs with no security or benefits. Preventable diseases and illness continue to torment them and their children, and the only readily available health service for them is family planning for the most questionable motives. Apartheid stress is a normal condition of life. In occupied Namibia these conditions are devastating for women because of the increased mass removals, appropriation of land, military brutality, rape and murder. The women and children in exile, just like their men, are not free from apartheid persecution either. Military attacks and brutal murder pursue them in their countries of asylum, especially the frontline States, which are subjected to intense political and economic coercion, sabotage and destabilization.

104. This report has shed light on the deteriorating political, military, economic and social conditions in southern Africa in which women and children suffer the most. Assistance to them is urgent. But this assistance must be comprehensive and should aim at destroying the apartheid system that dehumanizes the non-white populations. It should also give support to the oppressed people to strengthen their resistance and liberation struggle as well as to rebuild their lives when apartheid is defeated. To achieve this bold forward-looking strategies will be required at the national, regional and international levels.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

i) National Level in Africa

105. The women of Africa together with their governments should renew their commitment to the eradication of apartheid and support to their struggling sisters in all possible ways. In particular:

a) Women and women's organizations should keep themselves constantly informed of the situation of women and children under apartheid, disseminate information widely and build up awareness in their countries about the situation;

b) Women and their organizations should pressurize their governments to sever all links -- political, military, economic, diplomatic, cultural and sports -- with the apartheid Pretoria regime;

c) Women should organize national solidarity and support committees to educate public opinion on the evils of apartheid and its particular brutal oppression of women. Such committees should mobilize men and women to show solidarity in concrete and practical terms with the struggling black women of South Africa and Namibia;

d) Women and governments of the frontline States should continue their laudable defiance of the apartheid regime and give moral, political and material assistance to the exiles and refugees from South Africa and Namibia living with them;

e) Women and governments should use every opportunity to condemn apartheid in international fora, and urge in particular those countries that prop up the Pretoria regime to desist from giving it economic, diplomatic and military support which is used only to destroy men, women and children whose only "crime" is that they were born black.

ii) Regional Level

106. The collective self-reliance and regional cooperation called for by the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos make it imperative for African countries and organizations to join forces to remove apartheid, the greatest affront to the continent. The concerted efforts should include:

a) Regional African non-governmental and inter-governmental women's organizations, such as the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO), the Subregional Committees (SRCs) and the African Regional Coordinating Committee (ARCC) for the Integration of Women in Development, should make the issue of women under apartheid a priority issue for all their meetings and conferences and exert strong pressure on member States to implement sanctions and other measures recommended by the OAU and the United Nations;

b) PAWO, the SRCs, ARCC and other regional women's organizations should give active and concrete support and assistance to women in the national liberation movements, ANC, PAC and SWAPO, to strengthen their political, diplomatic, economic,social and leadership roles in the struggle;

c) Regional women's organizations in collaboration with concerned international women's groups should mount and intensify a campaign for the release of women and men imprisoned by the apartheid regime in South Africa and Namibia;

d) Urgent steps should be taken to strengthen and coordinate the activities of the women's programme in OAU, the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) of ECA, and the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) so that they can mount a major programme of research, seminars, workshops and other forms of technical assistance to help the oppressed women of South Africa and Namibia to overcome their many handicaps under apartheid. In this respect experienced, skilled and qualified African women should put their expertise and services at the disposal of women in the national liberation movements now and all women during the post-apartheid reconstruction in Namibia and South Africa to ensure their effective and equitable participation in all spheres of life in the new societies;

e) The OAU women's programme, ATRCW and AAWORD, in collaboration with PAWO, the SRCs, ARCC and other regional women's organizations, should launch a bulletin in all necessary languages to inform African women and the international community of the impact of apartheid on the lives of women and children of South Africa and Namibia and the efforts being made to redress the situation;

f) African States and the OAU should support the frontline States which are bearing the brunt of the burden of South African and Namibian refugee and displaced populations which are predominantly women and children;

g) African governments and the OAU should intensify their efforts to ensure the complete isolation of South Africa in all international relations. They should at the same time increase their political, diplomatic, military, economic and technical support to the national liberation movements and the frontline States in their struggle to eliminate apartheid and their plans for the reconstruction of Namibia and South Africa where women and men can enjoy equality, development and peace.

iii) International level

107. The United Nations and the international community must strengthen their resolve to see the abhorrent apartheid system eradicated and Namibia freed from the forces of occupation. Apartheid and racial injustice cannot be reformed; they must be totally removed, and the international community has the greatest responsibility to ensure that this is achieved and peace and human dignity restored to southern Africa. The international community should undertake particularly:

a) The speedy and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) for the independence of Namibia and all the United Nations resolutions calling for sanctions against South Africa, its isolation and abandonment of its racist policies;

b) The severance of all political, military, diplomatic and economic ties by countries in the West whose relations give respectability and material means to the apartheid regime to unleash untold misery and loss of life on the oppressed people, the majority of whom are black women and children;

c) The provision of greater moral and material assistance to all the bodies fighting to remove apartheid especially the national liberation movements, ANC, PAC and SWAPO, the African frontline States, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations;

d) The full implementation of the Programme of Action for Women in Southern Africa adopted by the World Conference held at Copenhagen in 1980 which is still valid. The Programme, which forms part of the World Plan of Action and is contained in document A/CONF. 94/6/Rev.1 entitled "Measures of Assistance for Women in Southern Africa", provides the most comprehensive strategies and actions that the international community can take to provide immediate legal, humanitarian, moral, political and technical assistance to women inside South Africa and Namibia and in exile and to prepare them to play active roles in the leadership and execution of programmes for the reconstruction of their countries once apartheid is destroyed.